

Greek in Kievan Rus'

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The linguistic badge of identity for *homo byzantinus* was Greek. Not all citizens of the empire were native Greek speakers. Some perhaps knew little or no Greek. But at least formally, in public, and certainly in the eyes of foreigners, the use of Greek was a sign of belonging almost as definitive as the Orthodox faith or allegiance to the emperor. *Homo slavonicus orthodoxus* was distinguished from *homo byzantinus* most obviously by his allegiance to a different linguistic community. Sometimes, however, it was possible for the Greek language to survive its cultural *translatio* without linguistic translation. In this study we shall consider its residual status and functions in one area of the Byzantine commonwealth.

What place, if any, did the Greek language have in the culture of Kievan Rus'? The question is sensitive, and the answers are diverse. At one end of the spectrum is the view that the Kievan elite was effectively bilingual in Greek and Slavonic,¹ and at the opposite end the assertion that no educated Kievan knew any educated form of Greek.² The distance from one extreme to the other is enormous, with plenty of room for intermediate standpoints.

Discussion is prolific, but—strangely—there has been no published attempt to assemble and assess all the relevant forms of surviving material. This article is a provisional attempt to fill the gap. It is a survey rather than a comprehensive catalogue. Nevertheless, I suggest that it reveals a pattern of evidence sufficiently detailed and consistent to justify a new interpretation of the question.

I start with the vaguest, most indirect types of

evidence and argument, and proceed thereafter to the specifics.

I. MIGHT-HAVE-BEENS AND MUST-HAVE-BEENS

The sources give us all the facts that we have, but not all the facts that there were. It is obviously absurd to imagine that nothing happened except what happens to be mentioned in the extant sources. Despite the scarcity of explicit textual references, it should be possible to deduce roughly the nature and extent of Kievan experience of Greek from the broader historical context. Circumstantial evidence is weak in law, but it does sometimes point to the truth.

There are two main areas of conjecture, of "might-have-been" and "must-have-been," in the study of Kievan experience of Greek. The first kind of conjecture concerns interaction between peoples, the issue of when, where, why, and how often Kievans and Byzantines met one another and had dealings with one another. The second area of conjecture concerns the Kievans' own cultural and educational aspirations, the issue of whether or to what extent Kievans *studied* Greek.

If we were to enumerate all the occasions and contexts in which the Rus' might have or must have had contact with *homines byzantini* and their language, the list would be long. In effect it would be a summary of the entire course of Russo-Byzantine political, military, ecclesiastical, monastic, commercial, and cultural relations. We would probably want to start with the military expeditions and trading treaties of the tenth century, and the residence of Rus' merchants in Constantinople. We would certainly dwell on the conversion of Vladimir I to Christianity, the arrival in Kiev of his Byzantine royal bride with her entourage. It would be essential to include the subsequent and consequent influx of Byzantine churchmen and craftsmen: almost all the metropolitans of Kiev, a

¹E.g., B. A. Uspenskij, *Jazykovaja situacija Kievskoj Rusi i ee značenie dlja istorii russkogo literaturnogo jazyka* (Moscow, 1983), 18–23.

²F. J. Thomson, "The Implications of the Absence of Quotations of Untranslated Greek Works in Original Early Russian Literature, Together With a Critique of a Distorted Picture of Early Bulgarian Culture," *Slavica Gandensia* 15 (1988), 63–91.

significant proportion of the bishops (at least in the early decades); the architects and mosaicists and painters who built and decorated the great cathedrals in the mid-eleventh century. Then one might consider the political and trading relations that were maintained and even intensified through the twelfth century, spreading from the Kiev-Novgorod axis into the increasingly prosperous and influential regions of Suzdal', Smolensk, and Galič. One might also cast a glance at later marriages of members of the Rjurikid dynasty to Byzantine spouses³ and at evidence for the presence of Byzantine monks, painters, and even fugitive would-be emperors in Rus' in the twelfth century. After topping the list with a survey of Kievan churchmen and pilgrims who traveled to Constantinople, and remembering to mention the emergence of a monastery of the Rhōs on Athos, we would probably conclude, with Ludolf Müller, that there was a "great range" of "many and various" personal contacts between Greek-speaking Byzantines and the Rus'.⁴

Surely, therefore, the Rus' must have been accustomed to hearing and using the Greek language? It would seem to strain credulity if one imagined that all dealings were conducted through interpreters provided by the Byzantines. The Rus' might have or must have habitually heard and used Greek: in the streets, in the marketplace, whether asking the way in Constantinople or haggling over the price of cloth; at home and at court, in diplomatic negotiation or in conjugal conversation; in the cloister and in church, since not all (if any) Byzantine prelates in Rus' could conduct services in Slavonic.⁵

As rhetoric, the accumulated might-have-beens and must-have-beens swell into a reassuringly but deceptively steady flow. The impression of plenty is created by a convenient linguistic imprecision: by the multiple use of vague collective and plural forms like "the Rus'," "Kievans," "Greeks," "Byzantines." Such forms are insidiously noncommittal. The subliminal implication is that they refer to a majority or at least to a substantial and significant

proportion of the members of each group, although they remain notionally applicable at any point on a scale from two people up to an entire population. They conjure up a vision of plenty while not excluding the possibility of scarcity.

If one lists the opportunities for Russo-Greek contacts, then one should also list the restrictions.

The shape and scope of Byzantino-Kievan linguistic contact was crucially limited by geography. Kievan Rus' was a neighbor of Byzantium's neighbors, rather than the occupant of the space next door. There was no shared land border, no interaction of adjacent and intermingling populations, no zones or pockets of natural bilingualism. When Byzantines met Kievans and Kievans met Byzantines, one side or the other had to travel a long distance, and travel had a purpose. This severely restrains numbers and opportunities. Compare the position of Bulgarians, for whom the "Greeks" and their language were just on the horizon or else uncomfortably within it. For most of the Rus', most of the time the "land of the Greeks" was out of sight and the Greek language was out of earshot.

No less vague and misleading than the national collectives is the word "Greek" when used of language. Greek in Byzantium was not one language. The listed contexts and contacts might have enabled some of the Rus' to ask the way to Hagia Sophia or perhaps to repeat formulae from the liturgy, but the spoken Greek of the streets and the intoned Greek of the church were very different from the meticulously studied Greek of Byzantine scholarship and intellectual discourse. The work and prayer of some Kievans must have made them aware of some forms of colloquial, liturgical, and diplomatic Greek,⁶ but none of the listed types of interaction either requires or implies any direct contact with the atticizing Greek of Byzantine higher learning.

Here the flow of nontextual evidence dries up. Conjectures about Kievan familiarity with the Greek *Umgangssprache* or *Kirchensprache* can be based on a consideration of historical circumstances. Conjectures about Kievan familiarity with learned Greek are mainly based on assessments of the surviving corpus of Kievan writings. Scholars, of course, disagree about the implications of this corpus. For some it is inconceivable that the Kievans could have created their Orthodox written

³ Bearing in mind the cautionary remarks of Alexander Kazhdan, "Rus'-Byzantine Princely Marriages in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 12-13 [1988-89] (1990), 414-29.

⁴ L. Müller, "Russen in Byzanz und Griechen im Rus'-Reich," *Bulletin d'information et coordination* 5 (1971), 96-97.

⁵ V. Vodoff, "Quelques questions sur la langue liturgique à Kiev au Xe et au début du XIe siècle," *Cyrilomethodianum* (1990, forthcoming). I am grateful to Prof. Vodoff for sending me a proof copy of this article.

⁶ See E. Hösch, "Griechischkenntnisse im alten Russland," in *Serta slavica in memoriam Aloisii Schmaus* (Munich, 1971), 250-60.

culture unless at least some of their cultural luminaries had been inducted into Byzantine learning from within, had studied Byzantine rhetoric, theology, and philosophy in the language of the original. For others, the consistent and distinguishing feature of Kievan written culture is precisely the *lack* of any clear evidence of any direct knowledge of or interest in Greek written culture.

At this level of generality it is impossible to prove either the positive or the negative. The might-have-beens and must-have-beens are necessary but not sufficient. The evidence of circumstances supplements but cannot supplant the evidence of texts.

II. TEXTUAL AND NARRATIVE REFERENCES AND ALLUSIONS

Textual references to the Greek language are rare in Kievan sources. Worse still, on closer inspection most of the apparent references turn out to be illusory or, at best, ambivalent.

The most extravagant allusions to Greek are (or were) to be found in sources known only to the eighteenth-century historian Tatiščev. Tatiščev tells of schools with Greek and Latin teachers, of programs of translation from Greek, of libraries of Greek books.⁷ Unfortunately, Tatiščev's main source for these revelations was probably his own historical imagination.⁸ On the actual functions of Greek in Kievan Rus', and on the image of Greek in Kievan writings, Tatiščev's narratives are wholly unreliable.

In the more authentic sources (authenticity in Kievan sources being usually a matter of degrees rather than absolutes) the most predictable cluster of references to the Greek language is gathered from passages which tell of Greek people. A late version of the twelfth-century(?) *Life of Leontij of Rostov* relates how the saint was "born and raised in Tsar'grad. He knew well both the language of the Rus' and the language of the Merja, and he was a skilled interpreter of the Rus' and Greek books."⁹

The *Paterik* of the Caves monastery in Kiev, composed in the 1220s partly from earlier tales, relates the story of a miracle. Early in the 1080s icon painters arrived in Kiev from Constantinople, believing themselves to have been commissioned by two men to decorate a small church. Once in Kiev they discovered that these two men had in fact been visions of Antonij and Feodosij, the founders of the Caves monastery, both of whom had been dead for over a decade. Much impressed, the painters remained in the monastery, and (says the compiler) "their Greek books have been preserved, in memory of this miracle."¹⁰

Around 1200 Dobrynja Jadrejkovič, who was later to become archbishop of Novgorod under the name of Antonij, went on a tour of the holy sites of Constantinople. In his description of what he saw and heard he tells of Emperor Leo the Wise, who took a *gramota* from the tomb of the prophet Daniel. Using this *gramota* Leo was able to set down in writing the names of all the future emperors. One manuscript adds that the pilfered document was "translated by the philosophers into the Greek tongue."¹¹

These three accounts look straightforward enough, but caution is essential even here. The references to Greek in the *Life of Leontij* and in Dobrynja's pilgrimage are not found in all the manuscripts. As we shall see, the phrase "Greek books" in Kievan sources does not always mean what it seems to say. And, most important, all three passages allude to Greek in contexts separated from the narrator by large chunks of time and/or space. Here Greek is remote, associated with saints or miracles, not part of contemporary experience. The preserved "Greek books" are sacred objects, museum pieces, not texts to be read.

Turning to the Kievan present, we find two Byzantines in Rus' who appear to allude to the Greek language when writing about themselves. Metropolitan Nikephoros I (1104–21)—or it might have been Nikephoros II (1183–1201)—commences a

⁷See, e.g., V. N. Tatiščev, *Istorija rossijskaja*, III, ed. S. N. Valk and M. N. Tixomirov (Moscow, 1967), 123–24, 206.

⁸E. E. Golubinskij, *Istorija russkoj cerkvi*, 2nd ed., I, pt. 2 (Moscow, 1901), 871–80.

⁹Text of ms. GPB, sobr. PDA, no. A 1–264, ed. G. Ju. Filipovskij in *Drevnerusskie predanija (XI–XVI vv.)* (Moscow, 1982), 125. "Merja" from the reading "mer'skij" indicated for the "fourth redaction" by Filipovskij in *Slovar' knižnikov i knižnosti Drevnej Rusi. X-pervaja polovina XIV v.* (Leningrad, 1987), 160. The text in *Predanija* gives "mir'skij," which it would be tempting—but probably incorrect—to emend to "rim'skij" ("of the Rhōmaioi"). For (early?) redactions without the references to

language see G. V. Semenčenko, "Drevnejšie redakcii Žitija Leontija Rostovskogo," *TrDrLit* 42 (1989), 241–54; also E. Hurwitz, *Prince Andrej Bogoljubskij: The Man and the Myth* (Florence, 1980), 94.

¹⁰*Kievo-Pečers'kij Paterik*, ed. D. Abramovič (Kiev, 1930; repr. Munich, 1964), 11; *The "Paterik" of the Kievan Caves Monastery*, trans. M. Heppell (Cambridge, Mass., 1989), 12.

¹¹*Kniga Palomnik: skazanie mest svjatyh vo Caregrade Antonija, arhiepiskopa Novgorodskogo v 1200 godu*, ed. H. M. Loparev, *Pravoslavnyj palestinskij sbornik* 17.3 (1899), 8; B. de Khitrowo, *Itinéraires russes en orient* (Geneva, 1889), 91. See also C. Mango, "The Legend of Leo the Wise," *ZRVI* 6 (1960), 71–72.

homily for Quinquagesima with an apology: "With many homilies, O my beloved and cherished children in Christ, should my tongue address you, and imbue your good and fertile land (I mean your souls) with His water. But I have not been given the gift of tongues (in the words of the blessed Paul) so as to fulfil with this tongue that which is entrusted to me, and thus I stand voiceless in your midst and am much silent. Since a homily is required today because the days of the great Fast are approaching, I have deemed it meet to deliver the homily in writing."¹²

This passage is usually taken to mean that Nikephoros knew no Slavonic, and that he therefore produced a written Greek text to be translated. Such a procedure would fit a known pattern: there are extant Greek and Slavonic texts of works by other Byzantine metropolitans of Kiev.¹³ However, Nikephoros does not actually say what he is normally assumed to have said. The gift of tongues in St. Paul (cf. 1 Cor. 12:8–14) means something more subtle than just the knowledge (whatever that may be) of a foreign language. Nikephoros mentions explicitly only the contrast between speaking and writing, not the contrast between Slavonic and Greek. Perhaps he *wrote* the homily in Slavonic. Or perhaps the conventional interpretation is correct.

In the mid-twelfth century a monk of the Caves called Feodosij translated into Slavonic a Greek version of Pope Leo I's Epistle to Flavian. We know this because Feodosij himself tells us in his preface. He confesses that he is not really skilled enough to "от гръчского словеньскы преложити" but that he nevertheless makes the attempt¹⁴ at the request of the monk Nikolaj, previously Prince Svjatoslav Davydovič, otherwise known as Svjatoša.¹⁵ Feodosij is the only named translator known to have worked in Kievan Rus'. He is normally reckoned to have been a Byzantine: indeed, he has become known as "Feodosij the Greek."¹⁶ But Feodosij himself does not actually say that he is Greek. He appeals for the prayers of "my patriarch," and his work includes rare Graecisms. It has been sug-

gested that he studied Slavonic before coming to Kiev, since his translation is also deemed to contain south Slavisms.¹⁷ Yet he could have been a Bulgarian, or a Kievan who had (or had not) studied abroad.

These passages are troublesome. Nikephoros is a "Greek" who may or may not be referring to the Greek language. Feodosij (or should we call him Theodosios?) refers to the Greek language, but may or may not be a "Greek."

No less problematic is the famous or notorious paragraph in the *Primary Chronicle* entry for 1037, conventionally thought to refer to a native school of translators established by Jaroslav the Wise.¹⁸ Horace Lunt has recently shown that the relevant phrase does *not* naturally mean that Jaroslav "translated books [or caused books to be translated] from Greek into Slavonic." He suggests that it may instead refer to the import of books, possibly to their transcription from Glagolitic into Cyrillic.¹⁹ However, Lunt effectively shows that the phrase is corrupt, and that no interpretation is reliable. The conventional interpretation therefore may still be correct.

Vladimir Monomach, in his *Testament* for his children, states that his father Vsevolod "understood five languages."²⁰ Casting around for likely candidates we may surmise that one of the five may have been Greek (Vsevolod's wife was Byzantine), but Vladimir does not specify. Uncertainty and ambiguity is the norm.

In pursuit of clarity let us turn to vocabulary, to Kievan uses of the adjective "Greek." The Rhōmaioi of Byzantium were known in Kievan Rus' as *greky*, apparently identified by their language rather than by their imperial heritage. If language was the definitive and distinguishing feature of Byzantines in Kievan eyes and ears, then perhaps the uses of the word will be informative.

In the *Laurentian Chronicle*, the adjective "Greek" (гръчський) occurs thirty-one times.²¹ On twenty-

¹² Makarij, *Istorija ruskoj cerkvi*, 3rd ed., II (St. Petersburg, 1888; repr. Dusseldorf-The Hague, 1968), 349.

¹³ See below, notes 37, 38.

¹⁴ O. Bodjanskij, "Slavjano-russkie sočinenija v pergamenom sbornike I. N. Karskogo," *Čtenija v Imperatorskom obščestve istorii i drevnostej rossijskikh pri Moskovskom universitete* 3 (1848), no. 7, p. 8.

¹⁵ On Svjatoša see Abramovič, *Kievo-Pečers'kij Paterik*, 113–19; Heppell, *Paterik*, 131–36.

¹⁶ See, e.g., T. V. Bulanina, "Feodosij Grek," in *Slovar' knižnikov*, 459–61.

¹⁷ See F. J. Thomson, "Made in Russia: A Survey of the Translations Allegedly Made in Kievan Russia," (forthcoming), note 54. I am grateful to Prof. Thomson for sending me a proof copy of this article.

¹⁸ *Povest' vremennyj let*, ed. D. S. Lihačev and V. P. Adrianova-Peretc, I (Moscow-Leningrad, 1950), 102; cf. *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, trans. S. H. Cross and O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor (Cambridge, Mass., 1953), 137.

¹⁹ H. Lunt, "On Interpreting the Russian Primary Chronicle: The Year 1037," *SIEJ* 32 (1988), 251–64.

²⁰ *Povest'*, I, 158; Cross, *Primary Chronicle*, 211.

²¹ *PSRL*, I, cols. 17, 26, 28, 30 (twice), 33, 35, 38, 42, 47 (twice), 48, 50, 51 (twice), 53 (twice), 62, 72 (twice), 73 (twice), 108, 109, 110, 154, 173, 174 (twice), 228.

eight occasions—all but three—the context clearly has nothing to do with language. The adjective qualifies “land” and “tsar” eight times each; “law” and “boats” or “ships” three times each; “envoys” twice; and “generals,” “power,” “city,” and “people” once each. There is one reference to “the Greek chronicle,” but this is another illusory allusion. The Greek chronicle is Greek (i.e., Byzantine) in provenance but not in language: it is an edited version of the Slavonic translation of the “Logothete’s” continuation of the chronicle of George the Monk.²² In other words, the use of the adjective in the *Laurentian Chronicle* confirms the pattern: Greek means Byzantine. Very rarely does it also mean Greek.

Only twice in the *Primary Chronicle* does the adjective “Greek” refer unequivocally to the Greek language. Both references occur in the tale of the translation of books from Greek into Slavonic by Methodios, in the *Chronicle’s* entry for 898.²³ Indeed, a cursory survey of a few works of translated literature reveals a similar pattern. The adjective is not found in the 1076 *Izbornik*, or in the *Tale of Barlaam and Joasaf*.²⁴ The *Uspenskij sbornik* does provide a few examples of “Greek” with a linguistic meaning, but, once again, only in texts concerned with the activities of Cyril and Methodios themselves.²⁵

The adverb (“грѣцьскы”) is used more consistently with reference to the language, both in translations and in native writings about native Kievans.

In the Slavonic version of George the Monk, “грѣцьскы” translates “Ῥωμαϊστὶ.”²⁶ Such usage has the authority and familiarity of the Bible. In John 19:20, where the inscription over the crucified Christ is written “in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek,” “грѣцьскы” renders “Ἑλληνιστὶ” (here “Ῥωμαϊστὶ” becomes “латиньскы”).²⁷

Discourse 16 in the Caves *Paterik* tells of the trib-

ulations of the Kievan monk Evstratij the Faster.²⁸ Evstratij was taken prisoner by the “godless Hagar- enes” (i.e., the Polovtsians) and sold to a Jew, who crucified him. As Evstratij’s soul was being borne heavenward on a chariot of fire “a voice was heard, saying in Greek (“грѣцьскы”): ‘This good man has been named a citizen of the heavenly city, and for this reason he will be called *protostrator* in your remembrance.’” In Discourse 26 of the *Paterik*, we hear of how the monk Lavrentij the Solitary cured a man possessed by demons. So dire was the demonic possession that the man “began to speak in Hebrew and in Latin and also in Greek; in short, *in languages which he had never heard*.”²⁹ Onlookers “were terrified by his change of language and by the diversity of tongues.”

The use of the adverb confirms the pattern. Evstratij heard Greek only when he was a long way from home (probably Cherson), already dead, and involved in a miracle. Lavrentij’s patient spoke Greek only when possessed by demons: Greek was either a miracle to astound or a disease to be cured. The three languages in Lavrentij’s list—biblical in origin, but surely reinforced by Cyrillo-Methodian texts on the “trilingual” controversy³⁰—are all *assumed* to be unfamiliar. A “diversity of tongues” was terrifying for monks.

Greek as remote sacral (or demonic) mumbo jumbo: this is the stable image presented in such native sources as care to mention the topic at all.

There is always an exception, or at least an apparent exception. In the mid-twelfth century, Metropolitan Klim Smoljatič wrote an Epistle to the priest Foma, who had accused him of vanity and of writing “philosophically.” As part of his denial, Klim lectures Foma on the nature of true learning:³¹

“Dear Foma, is this what you call vaingloriousness, that I investigate such things in detail? I recall again your teacher Grigorij, whom you mention. I am not ashamed to call him holy. But I would like to say, without judging him, but sincerely and truly: Grigorij knew his alpha, just like you, and his beta also, and all the four and twenty

²² PSRL, I, col. 17. Cf. O. V. Tvorogov, “Povest’ vremennyh let i Hronograf po velikomu izložēniju,” *TrDrLit* 28 (1974), 103–6.

²³ PSRL, I, cols. 26, 28; *Povest’*, I, 22, 23; Cross, *Primary Chronicle*, 62, 63.

²⁴ *Izbornik 1076 g.*, ed. V. S. Golyšenko et al. (Moscow, 1965); I. N. Lebedeva, *Slovoukazatel’ k tekstu “Povesti o Varlaame i Ioasafe”* (Leningrad, 1988).

²⁵ *Uspenskij sbornik XII–XIII vv.*, ed. S. I. Kotkov (Moscow, 1971), fols. 108c, line 14; 109b, lines 4–7; 113c, line 6; cf., e.g., fol. 23c, line 26 (in the *Skazanie* of Boris and Gleb) where the adjective qualifies “land,” as frequently in the *Primary Chronicle*.

²⁶ V. M. Istrin, *Hronika Georgija Amartola v drevnem slavjano-russkom perevode*, III (Leningrad, 1930), 227.

²⁷ E.g., *Aprakos Mstislava Velikogo*, ed. L. P. Žukovskaja (Moscow, 1983), fol. 168a, line 1 (p. 224).

²⁸ Abramovič, *Kievo-Pečers’kij Paterik*, 106–8; Heppell, *Paterik*, 124–25.

²⁹ Abramovič, *Kievo-Pečers’kij Paterik*, 128; Heppell, *Paterik*, 146.

³⁰ Either directly, or through e.g. *Povest’*, 22; cf. Cross, *Primary Chronicle*, 63.

³¹ N. K. Nikol’skij, *O literaturnyh trudah mitropolita Klimenta Smoljatiča, pisatelja XII veka* (St Petersburg, 1892), 126–27 (lines 533–45); cf. S. Franklin, *Sermons and Rhetoric of Kievan Rus’* (Cambridge, Mass., 1991), 47.

letters of the alphabet. Yet I could tell you of men, whom I myself have seen, who can repeat in alphas alone not just one hundred but two hundred or three hundred or four hundred, and as many betas. But consider carefully, dear Foma, one must consider carefully, and understand how all things are constituted. . . ."

The allusion to Greek is unspecific but unmistakable. In Cyrillic alphabets from the Kievan period the repertoire of letters ranges from twenty-seven to forty-three.³² The alphas and betas and the alphabet of twenty-four letters known by Grigorij, by Foma, and by others of Klim's acquaintance, must surely be Greek. This passage seems to provide, finally, a clear piece of evidence for Kievan familiarity with and study of the Greek language on a fairly routine basis.

Exceptions do not necessarily alter the rule. In the first place, this is only one small fragment, whose significance for a general survey should not be overemphasized. Second, Klim does not state that the language of study was Greek: it has been conjectured that these were Slavonic exercises based on Greek pedagogical models and preserving the nomenclature.³³ Third, even if the language *was* Greek, the alphas and betas probably imply no more than the rote learning of material arranged alphabetically. Fourth, Klim's main point is to make a distinction between the alpha and beta exercises on the one hand, and real understanding on the other hand. Klim regards such exercises in rote learning as entirely superficial: for him the Greek of Foma and Grigorij—if Greek it was—has no cultural significance and might as well be gibberish.

The circumstantial evidence (the might-have-beens and the must-have-beens) suggests that some Kievans must have known and used some Greek for a range of practical purposes. Klim's letter may point to the same conclusion (the counter-arguments are ingenious but not decisive). At the same time, *all* explicit textual and narrative references present Greek as remote and incomprehensible. We therefore arrive at the beginnings of a paradox. The *image* of Greek in Rus' may not correspond to the *facts* of Greek in Rus'. Such a para-

dox is perfectly feasible: popular stereotypes rarely correspond adequately to life.

For the moment, however, it is premature to speak of the facts, since we have surveyed only the conjectures and the allusions. But we do not need to rely on indirect witness: the fact is that Greek did exist and was used for native purposes in Kievan Rus'. We know this not just because circumstances suggest that it must have been so, or because it is mentioned in contemporary sources, but because specimens of it survive. We have looked at the reflections. Let us now consider the object itself.

III. EXTANT GREEK FROM KIEVAN RUS'

Greek in Greek

To start with an assertion and a list: Greek from Kievan Rus' survives in a very wide range of forms, from a very wide range of contexts, written in and on many different kinds of material. It survives in copies of parchment manuscripts, in mosaics, painted in frescoes, pressed on seals and coins, cast and chased in silver and gold, woven in fabric, scratched on birch bark, plaster, clay, and metalwork.

The bare list can make Greek in Kievan Rus' seem ubiquitous. It was not. It had specific and restricted uses and functions, and the pattern of its usage changed over time.

Imported objects. Whether or not they were produced for Kievan Rus', Greek inscriptions on imported objects became part of the cultural landscape in Kievan Rus' and should be noted here. Very few such inscribed objects can securely be assumed to have reached Rus' from Byzantium in the Kievan period. Reports tell us they existed: the "Greek books" of the painters of the Caves Monastery in the 1070s, as witnessed by the *Paterik*; perhaps the enamels on the binding for the Mstislav Gospels (ca. 1100), specially ordered in Constantinople by Naslav, who informs us of the fact in his colophon.³⁴ A curious survival is the cylindrical piece of silver which serves as a mount for the cross on the "Smaller Novgorod Sion." The Sion is a model of a church, probably a representation of the Holy Sepulcher. The inscription on the upper cover of the cylinder has been decoded by Nicholas Oikonomides as "Κωνσταντίνου προέδρου μυσ-

³² For comparative tables see V. L. Janin, A. A. Zaliznjak, *Novgorodskie gramoty na bereste iz raskopok 1977–1983 godov* (Moscow, 1986), 52–56.

³³ E. E. Golubinskij, "Vopros o zaimstvovanii domongol'skimi russkimi ot grekov tak nazyvaemoj sxedografii, predstavljajuščej u poslednix vysšij kurs gramotnosti," *Izvestija otdelenija russkogo jazyka i slovesnosti* 9 (1904), bk. 2, 49–59.

³⁴ *Aprakos Mstislava Velikogo*, 289 (fol. 213); on the dating see *ibid.*, 5–6.

τικοῦ κ(αὶ) μ(ε)γ(άλου) [οἰκ(ο)ν(όμου) τ(οῦ)] Τρο-
παιοφόρου,” and attributed to Constantine
Leichoudes in his (hypothetical) capacity as oikon-
omos of the monastery of St. George of the Man-
gana.³⁵

Manuscripts. No extant Greek manuscript has a
pre-Mongol Kievan provenance,³⁶ but we do have
later copies of works written in Greek by metro-
politans in Rus' from as early as the 1080s. The
treatise on azymes by Leo of Perejaslavl' survives
only in Greek, and was perhaps produced for
“Greeks.”³⁷ By contrast, the Canonical Responses
of John II were written for a local audience, and
exist both in Greek and in Slavonic translation.³⁸
The same author's Letter to Pope Clement also
survives in both versions, though the local context
is less obvious.³⁹ The letters and homily of Metro-
politan Nikephoros survive only in Slavonic.⁴⁰ Pre-
sumably (but, as we have seen, not indubitably), he
wrote them first in Greek.

These works are the least important and the
least informative for the purposes of the present
study. It is no surprise to learn that Byzantine met-
ropolitans could write Greek. We cannot tell to
what extent the Greek versions were read or seen
or known by Kievans. The Greek versions belong
to Kiev geographically, but perhaps not culturally.

Graffiti. The earliest Greek graffito discovered
on Rus' territory is the word “Ζαχαρίας” inscribed

on a dirham from an early ninth-century hoard
found at Peterhof.⁴¹ The object is too early to have
any implications for the culture of Kievan Rus'.

St. Sophia in Kiev contains several Greek graffiti.
None of them has been properly published. Greek
is largely ignored in Vysockij's studies of the St. So-
phias graffiti, and a full catalogue would probably
require a new complete survey of the cathedral.
One cluster of inscriptions—perhaps representa-
tive, perhaps not—is to be found at the east end of
the south aisle. Just above a prominent Slavonic in-
scription that is normally associated with Prince
Vladimir Monomach (1113–25) is the formula
“κ[ύρι]ε βοήθει τῷ σῷ δούλῳ,” followed by
“Νικηφόρος” repeated eleven times. The common
but unsubstantiated assumption is that this is Mon-
omach's contemporary, Metropolitan Nikepho-
ros.⁴² Another formulaic inscription, “κ[ύρι]ε βοήθ
(. . .) δούλω (Μιχαήλ?)” is squeezed between the
final and penultimate lines of the “Monomach”
Slavonic inscription. On the south face of the same
column are two large Greek inscriptions, appar-
ently made before the plaster was dry: “κ[ύρι]ε
κ[ύρι]ε βοήθι τον σον δουλων Γεοργη,” and “κ[ύρι]ε
ἐλέη[σον].”⁴³ Vysockij proposes that George was
one of the Greek artists engaged to decorate St.
Sophia in Kiev. On the opposite side of the same
aisle is a fragmentary graffito with the words “ὁ
ἅγιος” above a sequence of letters apparently rep-
resenting a date.⁴⁴ Another graffito lists three
names in Greek.⁴⁵

A twelfth-century(?) fragment of plaster from
Staraja Rjazan' bears an undeciphered remnant of
what is said to be Greek cursive. The editor of the
Rjazan' inscriptions, A. A. Medynceva, optimisti-
cally takes this as evidence that in Rjazan' there
were “learned bookmen who knew Greek.”⁴⁶

One of the birch-bark documents from Novgo-
rod, stratigraphically dated to the late twelfth or

³⁵ N. Oikonomides, “St. George of Mangana, Maria Skleraina, and the ‘Malyj Sion’ of Novgorod,” *DOP* 34–35 (1980–81), 239–46; cf. V. S. Šandrovskaja, “Grečeskaja nadpis' malogo novgorodskogo siona,” *Viz'vrem* 38 (1977), 157–60; for the most thorough study of the components and functions of the object see L. A. Sterligova, “Malyj sion iz Sofijskogo sobora v Novgorode,” in *Drevnerusskoe iskusstvo: hudožestvennaja kul'tura X-pervoj poloviny XIII v.*, ed. A. I. Komeč and O. I. Podobedova (Moscow, 1988), 272–86.

³⁶ See B. L. Fonkič, *Greko-russkie kul'turnye svjazi v XV–XVII vv.* (Moscow, 1977); idem, “Paleograficheskie zametki o grečeskikh rukopisjah ital'janskikh bibliotek,” *Vizantijskie očerki* (Moscow, 1982), 254–62.

³⁷ A. Pavlov, *Kritičeskie opyty po istorii drevnejšej greko-russkoj polemiki protiv latinjan* (St Petersburg, 1878), 115–32.

³⁸ Greek in *Zapiski Imperatorskoj Akademii nauk*, 22 (1873), supp. 5, 5–17; Slavonic in *Russkaja istoričeskaja biblioteka*, VI, 1–20.

³⁹ Pavlov, *Kritičeskie opyty*, 169–86.

⁴⁰ K. Kalajdovič, *Pamjatniki rossijskoj slovesnosti XII veka* (Moscow, 1821), 157–63; Makarij, *Istorija russkoj cerkvi*, 3rd ed., II, 336–52; A. Dölker, *Der Fastenbrief des Metropoliten Nikifor an den Fürsten Vladimir Monomach* (Tübingen, 1985). For a survey of the works of Greek churchmen in Kievan Rus' see G. Podskalsky, “Der Beitrag der griechstämmigen Metropoliten (Kiev), Bischöfe und Mönche zur altrussischen Originalliteratur (Theologie),” *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique* 24 (1983), 498–515.

⁴¹ I. G. Dobrovol'skij, I. V. Dubov, “Novaja nahodka graffiti na kufičeskoj monete,” *VestLU*, 1982, no. 2, 29–32, who conclude (without evidence) that the inscription was made by a resident of Rus'. N.B.: in the present survey all inscriptions will be reproduced in “normalized” spelling, unless the deviations are relevant for the argument.

⁴² S. A. Vysockij, *Srednevekovye nadpisi Sofii kievskoj* (Kiev, 1976), 48–9, no. 131; also pl. xxxvi and the photograph on the dust jacket.

⁴³ Vysockij, *Srednevekovye nadpisi*, 252–54.

⁴⁴ Vysockij, *Srednevekovye nadpisi*, 197–203.

⁴⁵ S. A. Vysockij, *Kievskie graffiti XI–XVII vv.* (Kiev, 1985), p. 25 and pl. viii.

⁴⁶ A. A. Medynceva, “Epigrafičeskaja nahodka iz staroj Rjazani,” *Drevnosti slavjan i Rusi*, ed. B. A. Timoščuk (Moscow, 1988), 249, 255, and fig. 3.

early thirteenth century, is inscribed “Μ(ε)ρκουρίω τῷ στρατηλάτῃ.” This was found among several birch-bark fragments associated with an icon painter named Olisej Grečin (= “the Greek”?).⁴⁷

Mosaics. The mid-eleventh century mosaic inscriptions in St. Sophia are in Greek. These consist of a large number of proper names on the portraits of saints, as well as six inscriptions with fuller texts.⁴⁸ The six are located: over the Theotokos in the apse (Ps. 45:6); above the “Eucharist” mosaic (“Λάβετε, φάγετε, τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ σῶμά μου . . .”, cf. Matt. 26:26–28); by the Annunciation (Luke 1:28, 38); in the cupola (“ἅγιος ἅγιος ἅγιος”); on the book held by Mark (Mark 1:1–2); and on the book held by John (John 1:1).

The monolingual purity of St. Sophia is not repeated elsewhere; fifty years later, in the Kievan monastery of St. Michael with the Golden Dome, the names labeling the portraits remain in Greek, but the scriptural texts have changed to Slavonic.⁴⁹ The eucharistic inscription (Matt. 26:26–28) is also found on three silver goblets from the twelfth century, always in Slavonic.⁵⁰

Amulets. Specimens of Medusa amulet (known in Russian as *zmeevik*) survive both from Byzantium and from Rus'.⁵¹ A *zmeevik* is a circular pendant with a depiction of a saint or saints on one side, and a representation of serpents or a gorgon on

the other. The standard inscription on the obverse is “ἅγιος ἅγιος ἅγιος κύριος σαβαὼθ πλήρης ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ γῆ.” The most intriguing example from Rus' is the “Černigov grivna.”⁵² On the obverse is a portrait of St. Michael, encircled by Greek (“ἅγιος ἅγιος ἅγιος . . .”) but labeled in Slavonic “М[и]х[а]и́лъ.” The reverse shows a gorgon surrounded by two concentric inscriptions: one in Greek, the other in Slavonic. The Greek is a garbled incantation starting “ὕστερα μελάνη μελανωμένη ὡς ὄφις εἰλύεσαι . . .” The Slavonic reads “г[оспод]и помози рабоу своему Василию аминь” (“Lord, help Thy servant Vasilij. Amen”). In view of its material (gold) the object is thought to have belonged to a prince, and the combination of name and location perhaps point to Vladimir/Vasilij Monomach at the time when he was prince of Černigov.

Coins and seals. This is by far the largest group of objects. The overall pattern of their linguistic chronology is from Slavonic, through a mixture of Slavonic and Greek, to Greek, back to a mixture, and finally to Slavonic again. However, the details are complex, and the nature of the complexity is significant.

Kievan Rus' has very few native coins, issued for a very small number of princes over a very brief period of time. The most recent catalogue lists only 340 specimens (227, excluding duplicates).⁵³ They are attributed to only three princes—Vladimir I (980–1015) and two of his sons, Svjatopolk (d. 1019) and Jaroslav (d. 1054)—and they all were probably issued not much more than a decade either side of 1000.⁵⁴

All the “textual” inscriptions on coins are in Slavonic. The “label” inscriptions—proper names identifying portraits—are at first in Slavonic and later change to Greek. This change was not only linguistic, but was linked to alterations in iconography: Slavonic is replaced by Greek when the portrait of the prince is replaced by the portrait of his saint.

The change came gradually. Vladimir's gold

⁴⁷ Janin and Zaliznjak, *Novgorodskie gramoty*, 25 (no. 552). See also B. A. Kolčín, A. S. Horošev, V. L. Janin, *Usad'ba novgorodskogo hudožnika XII veka* (Moscow, 1981), 147–49.

⁴⁸ Fully described by A. A. Beleckij, “Grečeskie nadpisi na mozaikah Sofii kievskoj,” in V. N. Lazarev, *Mozaiki Sofii kievskoj* (Moscow, 1960), 159–192; also Lazarev's own descriptions, *ibid.*, 77–132.

⁴⁹ V. N. Lazarev, *Mihailovskie mozaiki* (Moscow, 1966), 43–75. Note that the eucharistic inscription is truncated and erroneous toward the end: perhaps through miscalculation, more likely through ignorance. See also Beleckij, “Grečeskie nadpisi,” 169–70. No 11th-century fresco inscriptions have survived for comparison. See, however, the scrolls held by the prophets under the dome of St. Sophia in Novgorod: their heavily restored Slavonic inscriptions are dated by Lazarev to 1108 (by which time Slavonic in scriptural citation would fit the pattern), but V. Pucko, “Nadpisi na svitkah prorokov v kupol'nyh rospisjah Sofii Novgorodskoj,” *Cyrrilomethodianum* 7 (1983), 47–70, suggests the possibility of a date ca. 1050. Pucko also claims that these inscriptions, though Cyrillic, are paleographically “compatible with Greek” and may have been painted by Byzantine or Byzantine-trained artists. All of this is speculation.

⁵⁰ B. A. Rybakov, *Russkie datirovannye nadpisi XI–XIV vekov* (Moscow, 1964), nos. 16, 17, 26; pp. 23–25, 32; pls. xxvi, xxvii, xxx.

⁵¹ See J. Blankoff, “O dvoeverii i amuletah,” in *Vizantijska. Južnye slavjane i Drevnjaja Rus'.* *Zapadnaja Evropa. Sbornik statej v čest' V. N. Lazareva* (Moscow, 1973), 203–210; I. G. Spasskij, “Tri zmeevika s Ukrainy,” in *Srednevekovaja Rus'*, ed. G. K. Vagner (Moscow, 1976), 358–62.

⁵² Rybakov, *Russkie datirovannye nadpisi*, no. 9, pp. 19–20 and pl. xxxiv; also D. Obolensky, *Six Byzantine Portraits* (Oxford, 1988), 111–13.

⁵³ M. P. Sotnikova and I. G. Spasskij, *Tysjačelietie drevnejših monet Rossii: svodnyj katalog russkih monet X–XI vekov* (Leningrad, 1983).

⁵⁴ On the separate (and, in the present context, negligible) group of small silver coins issued nearly a century later by Prince Oleg Svjatoslavič of Tmutorokan', see V. V. Kropotkin and T. I. Makarova, “Nahodka monet Olega-Mihaila v Korčeve,” *SovArh* 1973, no. 2, 250–54.

coins (*zlatniki*) and type I of his silver coins (*srebniki*) show Vladimir on the obverse, and Christ on the reverse. Christ is identified in Slavonic.⁵⁵ On his remaining *srebniki* (types II, III, IV) Christ is replaced by Vladimir's version of the Rjurikid trident emblem.⁵⁶ In almost all instances the trident is accompanied by the latter part of the Slavonic "textual" inscription which had surrounded the ruler portrait on type I ("a ce ero cpeбo").⁵⁷ However, one anomalous variant of type IV bears here the inscription "святого Василия" ("of St. Basil").⁵⁸ a kind of transitional version, with Vladimir's saint named but not portrayed.

The *srebniki* of Svjatopolk show all stages of the process and bring it to completion. One version is as Vladimir's *srebniki* of types II and IV: ruler portrait on the obverse, trident emblem on the reverse, and a Slavonic text on both sides.⁵⁹ The next version—like Vladimir's transitional type IV hybrid—still shows the ruler portrait and the trident, but with "петор" inscribed on the reverse (probably a none-too-literary rendition of "Peter").⁶⁰ Finally Svjatopolk removes himself, adds a portrait of St. Peter, and labels it "Πέτρος" or "ὁ ἅγιος Πέτρος."⁶¹

All the *srebniki* of Jaroslav depict St. George rather than the prince, and are inscribed "ὁ ἅγιος Γεώργιος," despite the Slavonic text on the obverse.⁶²

A survey of coins, therefore, shows first that, as in the case of mosaic, "textual" inscriptions and "label" inscriptions have separate linguistic histories; second, that the language of the latter is part of the picture, not just words to be read but part of an iconographic design; and third, that the most consistent user of Greek is Jaroslav.

The continuous history of Kievan seals begins in

the mid-eleventh century, after the continuous history of Kievan coins has ended.⁶³ The pattern of script or language on native seals⁶⁴ varies partly in accordance with the status or office or nationality of the issuer, partly according to fashion and time. We shall consider first the "textual" inscriptions.

All known specimens of the seals of the metropolitans of Kiev are inscribed in Greek.⁶⁵ The extant seals were issued by twelve metropolitans (slightly less than half the total number of incumbents) from Theopemptos in the mid-eleventh century to Kirill II on the eve of the Mongol invasion. All these churchmen were probably "Greeks" appointed from Byzantium. We have no seals issued by the two reliably recorded native metropolitans, Ilarion (ca. 1051–54) and Klim Smoljatič (1147–54).

Among bishops the linguistic pattern is more elaborate. In the most persuasive (though not infallible) attributions, eleven bishops leave seals.⁶⁶ Seven are from Novgorod: Ivan (ca. 1110–30),⁶⁷ Nifont (1131–56), Arkadij (1156–63), Il'ja (1165–86), Martirij (1193–99), Mitrofan (1201–12, 1220–23), and Antonij (1212–20, 1225–28). The remaining four are Manuil of Smolensk (1137–ca. 1167), Koz'ma of Galič (1157–after 1165), Dionisij of Polock (d. 1183), and Lazar' of Smolensk (ca. 1210–20). The inscriptions on the reverse are all in Greek: usually "μ(ήτη) ρ θ(εο)ῦ"; in one case "ὁ Ἰω(άννης) Θεολ(ό)γος." In the series of Novgorodian seals Greek is the language of the "textual" inscriptions on the seals of Ivan, Nifont, Arkadij (type I), and possibly Il'ja (type I), while type II of the seals of Arkadij and Il'ja,⁶⁸ and all the seals of Martirij, Mitrofan, and Antonij are inscribed in

⁵⁵ Sotnikova and Spasskij, *Tysjačelietie*, 60–69, 115–39, nos. 1–51. Note that most of the *srebniki* are silver in name only (p. 64).

⁵⁶ Sotnikova and Spasskij, *Tysjačelietie*, 139–80, nos. 52–176. On the Rjurikid trident: A. A. Molčanov, "Ob atribucii ličnorodovyh znakov knjazej rjurikovičej X–XIII vv.," *Vspomogatel'nye istoričeskie discipliny* 16 (1985), 66–83.

⁵⁷ Note, however, that many of the inscriptions on type II *srebniki* are illegible: see Sotnikova and Spasskij, *Tysjačelietie*, 70–71.

⁵⁸ Sotnikova and Spasskij, *Tysjačelietie*, 79–80, 179–80, no. 175.

⁵⁹ Sotnikova and Spasskij, *Tysjačelietie*, nos. 177–205.

⁶⁰ See Sotnikova and Spasskij, *Tysjačelietie*, nos. 211–18, pp. 90–96.

⁶¹ Sotnikova and Spasskij, *Tysjačelietie*, nos. 206–10. Sotnikova and Spasskij date both the "Petor" coins and the "Petros" coins to 1016–18.

⁶² Sotnikova and Spasskij, *Tysjačelietie*, nos. 222–27; note also no. 225, where Jaroslav's name is given with a Roman "R".

⁶³ See the seals attributed to Svjatoslav Igorevič (d. 972) and to Izjaslav Vladimirovič (d. 1001): V. L. Janin, *Aktovye pečati Drevnej Rusi X–XV vv.*, I (Moscow, 1970), nos. 1, 2.

⁶⁴ Here the term "native" includes Greek officeholders in Kievan Rus': thus the seals of Greek metropolitans count as "native," while those of envoys or travelers do not. The distinction is approximate since there is usually no biographical information on the issuers of Greek seals found on Rus' territory: see e.g., Janin, *Aktovye pečati*, I, nos. 359–67; also N. A. Makarov and A. V. Černecov, "Sfragističeskie materialy iz Beloozera," in *Drevnosti slavjan i Rusi*, ed. B. A. Timoščuk (Moscow, 1988), 235 (no. 26).

⁶⁵ Janin, *Aktovye pečati*, I, 44–53, 174–76 (nos. 41–53).

⁶⁶ Janin, *Aktovye pečati*, I, 53–58, 176–79, 234 (nos. 54–66, 56a); idem, "Pečat' novgorodskogo episkopa Ivana Pop'jana (1110–1130 gg.)," *Vspomogatel'nye istoričeskie discipliny* 9 (1978), 47–56; idem, "Pečat' smolenskogo episkopa Lazarja," *Russia mediaevalis* 5, i (1984), 40–51.

⁶⁷ Janin, "Pečat' novgorodskogo episkopa," rejects his earlier attribution of one version of this seal to Archbishop Grigorij (1186–93): see his *Aktovye pečati*, I, no. 59.

⁶⁸ See Janin, *Aktovye pečati*, I, nos. 56 (Arkadij, type I), 56a (p. 234, Arkadij, type II), 57 (Il'ja type I), 58 (Il'ja type II).

Slavonic. In other words, the virtually continuous Novgorod series indicates a change in linguistic fashion around the late 1150s and early 1160s: before this period seals are in Greek; during this period they fluctuate between Greek and Slavonic; subsequently they remain Slavonic. The seals of the remaining four bishops do not seriously contradict this pattern: those of Manuel, Koz'ma, and Dionisij are inscribed in Greek, while the thirteenth-century seal of Lazar' is inscribed in Slavonic.

It would be convenient if the linguistic change reflected an ethnic change, if the shift to Slavonic in the inscriptions reflected the advance of Slavs in the higher clergy. However, only one of the listed bishops (Manuil of Smolensk) was definitely a "Greek."⁶⁹ Others may have been, but there is insufficient evidence. Moreover, Arkadij and (perhaps) Il'ja issue seals in both languages.

All decipherable and reasonably attributable seals of princes from the eleventh century bear the principal "textual" inscriptions in Greek.⁷⁰ This group comprises twenty-seven matrices for seals produced for thirteen princes or their spouses. The regular production (or the regular survival) of seals commences in mid-century: possibly from Jaroslav, perhaps from his sons.⁷¹ The most common inscription is the formula "Κύριε βοήθει τῷ σῷ δούλῳ . . ."

Among laymen fashion changes some fifty or sixty years earlier than among bishops. The critical period seems to have been ca. 1090–1110. From these transitional years we find the Slavonic seals of the Novgorod functionary Ratibor (with increasingly flawed attempts at Greek for the label for St. Clement on the reverse),⁷² and an enigmatic cluster of seals bearing the Slavonic legend "днєслово," tenuously if not tentatively attributed by Janin to several different princes and churchmen.⁷³ Among princes the turn-of-the-century

transition is best recorded in the seals of Vladimir Monomach, whose early seals are inscribed in Greek and whose later seals are inscribed in Slavonic.⁷⁴ All subsequent seals issued by laymen bear their "textual" inscriptions in Slavonic.

The "label" inscriptions on laymen's seals show a completely different pattern. Or rather, they lack *any* clear linguistic pattern or chronology. On any given seal the language of the portrait label does not necessarily correspond to the language of the "textual" inscription. In view of our observations on the coins, one form of linguistic asymmetry is predictable: long after Slavonic has become the standard language in "textual" inscriptions, Greek portrait labels remain common in the iconography of seals, as they are common as part of the iconography in whatever medium saints are depicted.⁷⁵ More peculiar is the reverse form of inconsistency: a Greek "textual" inscription with a portrait label in Slavonic. Yet there are specimens of this even from the period when the visual use of Greek was most fashionable. For example, a well-attested series of seals issued by Prince Vsevolod Jaroslavič, dated to the third quarter of the eleventh century, is inscribed with the message "Κ[ύρι]ε βο[ή]θει τῷ σῷ δ[ού]λῳ Ἀνδρέα τῷ Σβλάδῳ" (eight matrices, ten seals).⁷⁶ On the reverse they show St. Andrew, normally labeled (in various abbreviated forms) "ὁ ἅγιος Ἀνδρέας," but one in the series replaces the Greek with the Slavonic "Андрѣи," complete with *jer'* and *jat'*.⁷⁷ The slightly later seals of David Igo-revič of Volhynia (1085–1112) are inscribed in Greek "Κύριε βοήθει τῷ σῷ δούλῳ Δαβίδ ἄρχοντι Ῥωσίας," but the portrait on the reverse is labeled in Cyrillic "Давыдъ."⁷⁸

One cannot write a single history of the language of seals in Kievan Rus'. Textual fashions change at different speeds in different contexts. Portrait fashions seem almost random. It becomes increasingly plain that the uses of Greek in Kievan Rus' cannot be studied as an isolated, self-contained subject, without reference to, on the one hand, nonlinguistic forms of representation (iconography) and, on the other hand, the uses of Slavonic.

⁶⁹ On Manuil see S. Franklin, "Who was the Uncle of Theodore Prodromus?," *BSI* 45 (1984), 40–45.

⁷⁰ Janin, *Aktovye pečati*, I, 14–41 (nos. 3–40).

⁷¹ On the earlier seals see above, note 63. Janin, *Aktovye pečati*, I, 23–24, is noncommittal on the attribution of seal no. 24; cf. Makarov and Černecov, "Sfragističeskie materialy," 237–38, who argue for its attribution to Jaroslav.

⁷² Janin, *Aktovye pečati*, I, nos. 67–71.

⁷³ Janin, *Aktovye pečati*, I, nos. 74–96. Note also the Greek seals of the "protoproedros Eustathios" (nos. 72–73) which Janin dates to the 1090s and attributes to the Novgorod governor Zavid. However, two such seals have now been discovered among those stratigraphically dated to the mid-12th century: see Kolčín, Horošev, and Janin, *Usad'ba novgorodskogo hudožnika*, 98. It is more likely that Eustathios was a Byzantine functionary.

⁷⁴ Janin, *Aktovye pečati*, I, nos. 25, 97–116.

⁷⁵ Janin, *Aktovye pečati*, I, nos. 84, 98, 99, 117, 130; also the mosaic portraits in the church of St. Michael in Kiev, and on one of the 12th-century chalices: see above, notes 47, 48. Abbreviations are especially stable (e.g., "МР ΘΥ," or the monogram "α" inside "Θ" for "ὁ ἅγιος").

⁷⁶ Janin, *Aktovye pečati*, I, nos. 15–22.

⁷⁷ Janin, *Aktovye pečati*, I, no. 17.

⁷⁸ Janin, *Aktovye pečati*, I, nos. 26, 27.

Greek in Slavonic

The functions of Greek in Kievan Rus' are not exhausted by the functions of "Greek in Greek." There are murkier areas of interaction, where it is not always easy to draw clear boundaries between Greek and Slavonic as languages, or between Greek and Cyrillic as scripts.

Church Slavonic is full of Graecisms—lexical, syntactic, even graphic (through the affinity of Cyrillic with Greek). Lexical Graecisms are the most conspicuous and the least helpful. The presence or absence of calques or loan words in a Kievan text is no guide to the author's knowledge or ignorance of Greek. Local perceptions of the "Greekness" of any given word doubtless varied over time, space, and society: what was strange and foreign to a neophyte townsman at the end of the tenth century might have sounded almost native to a monk at the end of the twelfth century. A modern ear cannot retrieve such nuances. Orthographic Graecisms are less common but perhaps more revealing. For example, it might be productive to analyze the sporadic appearance of an intervocalic "r," perhaps affected by contemporary pronunciation of "γ": hence "василигѣ" in the Černigov grivna, "бежагѣт" and "свогѣго" in a graffito from St. Sophia, and "алелугиѣ" in a kontakarion.⁷⁹

Occasionally writers from Rus' produce Greek, rather than Graecism. The abbot Daniil describes worship at the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem in the early years of the twelfth century. At one point the congregation cries out "кирие елеисон."⁸⁰ The phrase was probably familiar enough in Kiev to have the status of a loan word, but Daniil presents it as Greek, with a translation. Among the wondrous sights of Constantinople described by Dobrynja Jadrejkovič (future Archbishop Antonij of

Novgorod) was a representation of "царь Корлеи о софосъ" ("κύριος Λέων ὁ σοφός").⁸¹ In the Great Church Dobrynja saw a mosaic likeness of Christ, which had once accosted a passing priest with the words "ис полла ити деспода" ("εἰς πολλὰ ἔτη, δέσποτα").⁸² Again the context for reported Greek is distant and miraculous.

The most extensive Greek texts in Cyrillic letters from Kievan Rus' are found, like the above examples, in a liturgical or ecclesiastical context: in a *kondakar'* (kontakarion) formerly in the monastery of the Annunciation at Nižnij Novgorod, now in the State Public Library in St. Petersburg (GPB, Q.p.I.32).⁸³ The manuscript, known as the *Blagoveščenskij kondakar'*, dates from the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, but its text is probably derived from a much earlier original.⁸⁴ Scattered around this text are fragments of phrases of Greek in Cyrillic letters. On fols. 84v-85v there is a troparion to the Cross in Slavonic, followed by the same troparion in a Cyrillic transcription of Greek.⁸⁵ Fols. 93v-94v contain a koinonikon in Slavonic, but with inserted Greek (in Cyrillic) intonational formulae. On fol. 109 Greek interrupts Slavonic phrases and even Slavonic words: "ипе [εἶπε] яко пал [πάλη]"; "въ веки ми ипе лость его," where the Greek "ипе" splits the word "милость" into two incomprehensible halves. Greek formulae recur throughout the Asmatikon on fols. 114-121v ("о фѣѡс моу," "тин икоумени," "ен оли кардиа моу," "доксаци ѡ фѣѡсъ," "эпи си Коурие"). Boris Uspenskij, in his work on the language of Kievan Rus', assumes that the *Blagoveščenskij kondakar'* is evidence of bilingualism in Greek and Slavonic.⁸⁶ In fact it shows the opposite. Certainly these passages prove that some Greek was retained in the liturgy as late as the thirteenth century, but the transliterated fragments in the *Blagoveščenskij*

⁷⁹ Rybakov, *Russkie datirovannye nadpisi*, 20, gives only a "normalized" spelling for the Černigov grivna ("ВАСИЛИИѢ," with an iotized *jus boľšoj*). The graffito: Vysockij, *Srednevekovye nadpisi*, 32-34 (no. 108), as corrected by T. V. Roždestvenskaja, "Leksiko-semantičeskij analiz nadpisi XI v. iz kievskoj Sofii," *Russkaja istoričeskaja leksikologija i leksikografija* 4 (1988), 98-105. On the kontakarion see below, note 83 (the spelling "алелугиѣ" is fairly widespread). Cf. the apparently opposite phenomenon: Slavonic "r" for Greek iota in transliterated words, esp. in initial position: e.g. "ГЕРЕМЕА" in a birch-bark document from Smolensk, D. A. Avdusin, E. A. Mel'nikova, "Smolenskije gramoty na bereste (iz raskopok 1952-1968 gg.)," in *Drevnejšie gosudarstva na territorii SSSR. 1984* (Moscow, 1985), 204-5 (no. 7); or the frequent "генварь," or the distorted colloquialism "Стерець," probably from "εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν": see A. I. Sobolevskij, "Čto takoe Stegerŭ?," *Izvestija otdelenija russkogo jazyka i slovesnosti* 23 (1918), bk. 1, 187.

⁸⁰ Abt Daniil. *Wallfahrtsbericht. Nachdruck der Ausgabe von Venevitzinov 1883/5*, ed. K.-D. Seemann (Munich, 1970), 136.

⁸¹ Loparev, *Kniga palomnik*, 7.

⁸² Loparev, *Kniga palomnik*, 20. For the same Greek-in-Slavonic phrase, uttered by another (much later) talking image of Christ, see *Pamjatniki literatury Drevnej Rusi. Seredina XVI veka* (Moscow, 1985), 228.

⁸³ Brief description in *Svodnyj katalog slavjano-russkikh rukopisnykh knig, hranjaščihja v SSSR. XI-XIII vv.* (Moscow, 1984), 170-71 (no. 153); text in *Das altrussische Kondakar': auf der Grundlage des Blagoveščenskij Nižgorodskij Kondakar'*, ed. A. Dostál and H. Rothe, II (Giessen, 1976); description and brief comparison with equivalent mss.: Gregory Myers, "The Blagoveschensky Kondakar: A Russian Musical Manuscript of the 12th Century," *Cyrrilomethodianum* 11 (1987), 103-27.

⁸⁴ N. Uspenskij, *Drevnerusskoe pevčeskoe iskusstvo* (Moscow, 1971), 47-54.

⁸⁵ See esp. K. Levy, "Die slavische Kondakarion-Notation," in *Anfänge der slavischen Musik* (Bratislava, 1966), 77-92.

⁸⁶ B. A. Uspenskij, *Jazykovaja situacija Kievskoj Rusi*, 19.

kondakar' are not preserved either by or for people who actually read and understood Greek. They are an enclosed group of fossilized formulae, like the “кирие елейсон” cited by Daniil from Jerusalem, or the “ис полла ити деспода” cited by Dobrynja/Antonij from Constantinople, or the “тин икоумени” (as in the *kondakar'*) of a graffito in St. Sophia in Kiev,⁸⁷ or the “о агнос” of portrait labels. They are ritual noises in ritual chants, mostly meaningless⁸⁸ phrases of sacred mumbo jumbo, a kind of aural iconography, equivalent to the visual iconography of the Greek labels on portraits of saints. They reinforce the image of Greek as a set of distant, wondrous, holy sounds and signs.

Hybrids

The portrait labels fluctuate between Greek and Slavonic (or Cyrillic) so freely that the languages and scripts become difficult to disentangle.

In the first place, different labels in a related set or series can use different graphic conventions. The “Greater Novgorod Sion” (not to be confused with the “Smaller Novgorod Sion” discussed above), is usually dated to the late twelfth or early thirteenth century. Its side panels show full-length portraits of saints.⁸⁹ Some of the labels are Slavonic (ΘΩΜΑ; ΘИЛИПЪ; ΙΩ ΒΓΟΣΛΩΒЪ; ΙΑΚΩΒЪ; ΠΑΒΛΑЪ; ΒΑΡΘ[Ο]ΛΟΜ[Β]Ι). Others are a sort of semi-Greek (ΜΑΤΘ[Θ]ΩΣ, with the Greek suffix but with Cyrillic *jat'* and *jer*). Others are compatible with Greek (ΠΕΤΡΟΣ). A twelfth-century chalice, with a Slavonic eucharistic inscription around the outer rim, has six portrait roundels on the sides: five bear common iconographic abbreviations (“МР ΘΥ” etc), but the sixth is a hybrid: “ΑΓΗΘС ГЕΩΡΓΗΘС.”⁹⁰ A twelfth-century inscription woven in an earlier Byzantine cloth gives the Slavonic “СИМОНЪ,” “ΜΑΤΘ[Θ]И,” “ΛΥΚΑ,” “ΒΑΛΘΟΡ[Θ]ΜΕΙ” (sic!), but the Graecism “ΜΑΡΚ[Θ]С” and the “over-corrected”

“ΙΩΑΗΘС.”⁹¹ It is difficult to guess which language or languages the makers of these inscriptions thought they were reproducing.

Different matrices for seals attributed to Vsevolod Mstislavič (prince of Novgorod 1117–1136) give the forms “ΘΕΔОР,” “ΘЕОДОР,” “ΘΟДОРОС,” and “ΘЕΩДОРОС.” Those of his brother Svjatopolk add “ΘЕОДОРОС,” “ΘЕΩДОРЪ,” and (eventually) “[Θ]Е[Ο]Д[Ω]РОС.”⁹² In the 1170s Prince Jurij Andreevič has on his seals both the vernacularized Slavonic “ΑΗΟДРИИ” and the hybrid “ΑΗЪ[Д]РЕОС.” Jaroslav Vladimirovič has “ДИМИТР,” “ДИМИТРИ,” and “ДИМТРИОС.”⁹³ Odd pairs of names on a single seal include, for example, “ΛАЗОРЪ” and “ΒΑΣΙΛΙΩ,” “ΑΚΙΜЪ” and “ΘЕОДΩРОС.”⁹⁴

The forms of “ὁ ἅγιος,” common regardless of the language of the saint’s name, range from the monogram “a” inside “o”, through the variants “o ΑΓΙΟС” and “o ΑΓИОС” (or “o ΑΓΗΘС”) to the idiosyncratic “Ω ΑΓΙΩСЪ.”⁹⁵ A seal attributed to Princess Sophia of Polock is inscribed on one side “o ΑΓΙΟС ΓЕΩΡΓΙΟС” in Greek, and on the other side “ΑΓΙΑ СОФΗΛ” using the Cyrillic *jus malyj*.⁹⁶

The variations of morphology and script are not susceptible to systematic explanation. Sometimes hybrid or defective Greek may betray Slavonic workmanship, but in the present context the fact of variability is more important than the mother tongue of the designer, and the only consistent fact is the fact of inconsistency. In the labels on portraits of saints, linguistic precision was not impor-

⁹¹ L. V. Efimova, “Pamjatnik drevnerusskogo šit’ja s nadpisjami XII v. iz sobranija GIM,” *Voprosy slavjano-russkoj paleografii i kodikologii*, *Trudy Gosudarstvennogo istoričeskogo muzeja* 63 (1987), 59–62.

⁹² Janin, *Aktovye pečati*, I, nos. 133–37, 143–48.

⁹³ Janin, *Aktovye pečati*, I, nos. 176–77, 190–92.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, nos. 77, 234. Janin attributes no. 77 to Bishop Lazar’ of Perejaslavl’ (1105–13), a contemporary of Mina of Polock, to whom Janin ascribes a “днєслово” seal (no. 93). Even if correct, these tenuous attributions do not disrupt the linguistic chronology, since in effect both seals bear emblem inscriptions rather than individual texts.

⁹⁵ Rybakov, *Russkoe prikladnoe iskusstvo*, 53.

⁹⁶ Janin, *Aktovye pečati*, I, no. 221, with “o ΑΓΙΟС ΓЕΩΡΓΙΟС” on the reverse. Seals are the most abundant sources for hybrid inscriptions, but the same phenomenon can be observed wherever saints are depicted. See for example “@ ΛЖКАС” (Greek form, Slavonic *jus bol’šoj* but no *jer*) on the portrait of St. Luke in the earliest dated East Slav ms. (1056–57): *Ostromirovo Evangelie. Faksimil’noe vosproizvedenie* (Moscow, 1988), fol. 87v. Note that the label for the miniature of St. John (fol. 1v.) is in Greek (“@ Ἰω(άννης) ὁ θεολό(γος)”), while the texts being written by both Evangelists are shown in Slavonic.

⁸⁷ Vysockij, *Srednevekovye nadpisi*, 80–81, no. 178 and pls. LXXIV, LXXV. Vysockij misreads this inscription as Slavonic.

⁸⁸ Some of the formulae were presumably understood by some people, but there is a fundamental difference between these scraps and, for example, the genuinely bilingual 16th-century Psalter in the British Library (Harl. MS 5723); or the Greek-in-Cyrillic troparion and doxology in a 17th-century Serbian liturgical miscellany (in the author’s possession), where the text is followed by four lines of Greek-in-Greek.

⁸⁹ B. A. Rybakov, *Russkoe prikladnoe iskusstvo X–XIII vekov* (Leningrad, 1970), 70–72; G. N. Bočarov, *Hudožestvennyj metall Drevnej Rusi X-načalo XIII vv.* (Moscow, 1984), 218–39.

⁹⁰ Rybakov, *Russkie datirovannye nadpisi*, no. 26, pl. xxx.

tant. Variation and hybridization occurred because the labels were not really perceived *either* as Greek *or* as Slavonic, not perceived as language but as emblem, as parts of a picture rather than as a text. These variegated hybrid labels are the best illustrations of the predominantly visual or iconographic—rather than linguistic—functions of Greek in the public life of Kievan Rus'.

IV. CONCLUSION

We started with a question: what place, if any, did the Greek language have in the culture of Kievan Rus'? It emerges that there are different answers with respect to different kinds of Greek in different contexts at different times.

The commercial community leaves no firsthand account of itself,⁹⁷ but one need not doubt that throughout the period at least some of those who did business with Greeks had a practical knowledge of contemporary business Greek. The circumstantial evidence is strong. Hints of a wider low-level acquaintance with low-level Greek occasionally surface in various forms: in graphic contamination, in the strictures of Klim Smoljatič to Foma. None of the evidence permits more than the very vaguest speculation. This is not accidental. The purveyors and promoters of Kievan written culture did not deign to comment or record such humdrum uses of Greek. It was not produced for internal consumption, and it was not perceived to be a significant component of native culture.

The cultural uses and functions of Greek within and for Kievan Rus' change over the centuries. In the mid- to late eleventh century Greek was publicly and prestigiously prominent in many spheres:

⁹⁷The Russo-Byzantine treaties are of course translated, but with no indication of the nationality of the translators.

in major churches quite possibly in the liturgy; in the mosaics of St. Sophia; on the seals of princes, metropolitans, and bishops; on the portrait labels of Jaroslav's coins; in iconography. Literary culture was Slavonic, but in symbolic display it was fashionable for the Kievan elite of the day to wear the linguistic badge of *homo byzantinus*.⁹⁸

From the late eleventh century Greek was gradually replaced by Slavonic wherever a textual, linguistic message had to be conveyed intelligibly: in public inscriptions and on the seals of princes by about 1100, on the seals of bishops (but not metropolitans) by about 1150–60. But Greek did not vanish. It continued to be used for native purposes. Remnants of it survived, stranded and fossilized in sight and sound: in the aural iconography of ritual chants, in the visual iconography of portraits of saints.

These residual uses of Greek did not necessarily require a knowledge of Greek. References in native writing show that Greek as a language was generally perceived to be remote and incomprehensible, associated with distant wonders and miracles. Such was the Kievan cultural image of Greek. Indeed, the main cultural function of Greek in Kievan Rus' was precisely *as* image—whether for the eye or for the ear—rather than as language. Both its visual and its aural forms interacted with Slavonic and Cyrillic, and the resultant variegated hybrids, though they were often linguistically nonsensical, preserved a sacred and aesthetic significance.

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⁹⁸The public fashion for Greek provides circumstantial support for suggestions that Greek may have had wider cultural uses in the mid-11th century (e.g., the *Chronicle* entry for 1037; Prince Vsevolod's accomplishments; the sources of Ilarion).